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keep away fever from the household. It must not be supposed that the nat guardian of the house has necessarily any affection for those who have built the place where he has taken up his abode. He probably regards them only with cold indifference, however generous they may be in their offerings, and were he not propitiated by these gifts he would almost certainly display his anger by doing the inhabitants some grievous injury. But then he dislikes his haunts being intruded upon, and if a stranger comes at an unwonted time—a burglar at midnight, for example—it is quite likely that the eing saung nat will attack him violently, scare him out of his wits, or give him the colic. Thus without any really estimable purpose in his mind, Min-magayi may be a considerable protection to his worshippers, just as an "awful example" is useful to teetotallers.

Beyond this guardian, or demon of the house, there is the guardian nat of the village, the ywa saung nat, of whose shrine at the end of the town I have already made mention. None of the lower-class Talaings would ever think of eating a morsel without first holding up his platter in the air, and breathing a prayer to the village nat. They are particularly fond of putting up shrines to the nats under the le'pan tree, from the wood of which coffins are frequently made. A feast must be held every three or four years in honour of this nat, at which the natkadaw, a woman called the nat's wife, dances. This is done in order that sickness may be kept away. Should an epidemic actually break out, a very elaborate ceremony is gone through. Probably first of all the figure of a spectre, or of a bilu, is painted on an ordinary earthenware water-pot, and this is solemnly smashed to pieces about sundown, with a heavy stick or a dah. As soon as it gets dark, the entire populace break out into yells, and make as much noise generally as they can compass, with the view of scaring away the evil spirit who has brought the disease. This is repeated on three several nights, and if it is not then effective the yahans are called in to give their assistance. The prior, with his following, repeat the Ten Precepts, chant the Payeit-gyi, and then one of the sermons of the Lord Buddha is declaimed, the same by the preaching of which he drove away the pestilence

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which was devastating the country of Wethali. If this last ceremony is not effectual the village is abandoned. The inhabitants leave the sick and the dying to their fate, and go off to the jungle, where each household camps out by itself for a time. Before they return again, the yellow-robed monks, in recognition of much alms, read the Law up and down the street between the houses. When they have gone back to the monastery, the nat's shrine is repaired, and abundant offerings deposited. Having thus made their peace with the representatives of both religions, the people return to their houses, light fires, cook rice for new offerings, and then enter upon their ordinary pursuits as if no interruption whatever had occurred.

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This is what would take place in any ordinary Burman village. But among the Talaings, and in the more retired places in the jungle, occupied by ignorant uncultivated Burmans, the function called ywakyathi would be carried out, which is much more purely geniolatric in its character. This is sometimes done when a prominent man in the hamlet is sick, more often when there is danger of a contagious disease. A great feast of cooked rice and meat, roasted fowls and ducks forming a prominent part of it, is heaped up on a platform specially erected for the purpose some distance outside the village. Everybody in the village is required to have some part in the ceremony. A few are sent out beforehand, who dress themselves up in a fantastic way, and pretend to be bilus, evil nats, and witches. With them are others who feign to be dogs, and rush about on all fours, barking and howling; others represent pigs, and grunt and nuzzle about with their noses in the ground. After this performance has been carried on for some time, the remainder of the villagers come out in a band, and, through one or more spokesmen, demand of the possessed whether those lying sick at home will recover, and whether the bad spirits are satisfied with the offerings. It is specially ordained at these exhibitions that no one shall be called by his real name; such mention, if made inadvertently, would expose the person addressed to considerable danger, even if he should make no sign betraying himself, for he certainly would not answer. The quasi tasés always reply that the

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sick will recover and the plague leave the locality. Thereupon the villagers rush off like madmen into the surrounding forest, and run about hither and thither in a reckless way with an open cloth, or the end of their waistcloth, in their hands. Some of them suddenly make a plunge with their cloth over a bush or a tussock of grass, and then closing it up carefully, hurry breathless back to the village. The leip-bya or "butterflies" of the sick man are supposed to have been captured. The paso, or cloth, is carefully opened and shaken over the patient's head, and the leip-bya is supposed to return to its proper habitation. This operation is repeated several times, in case a wrong "butterfly" might have been captured, or lest the actual one should have escaped on the way. Then everybody returns. The function is not without its danger, for it has happened that the [754] temporary mimes have become permanently possessed of evil spirits, and as witches and wizards have proved as great curses to the neighbourhood as any pestilence could have been. Which things are an allegory. The whole ceremony [178] is beginning to get into very bad odour in the more settled parts of the province, and respectable people avoid having anything to do with it, while those who have taken a part are ashamed to own it.

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All these nats are directly connected with a particular locality, and therefore well known to, and regularly propitiated by, the inhabitants of that place. But there are abundance of nats to be found elsewhere, away from villages and houses, and all of them equally ready to resent any injury which the passer-by may unwittingly do them. When a Burman starts on a journey he hangs a bunch of plantains, or a twig of the tha-bye tree, on the pole of the buffalo cart or the stern of the boat, to conciliate any spirit whose beat he may intrude upon. The fisherman makes offerings in his nat-sin every time he launches his dug-out; the lonely hunter in the forest deposits some rice and ties together a few leaves whenever he comes across some particularly large and imposing tree, lest there might be a thi'pin-saung nat dwelling there. Should there be none, the tied-back twigs will at any rate stand in evidence to the taw-saung nat, the demon who presides over all the forest.

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776 769 were killed. They are called nat-sein. Advantage is taken of this to guard the capital. When a town is founded, at each of the four corners of the city walls and under the gate-posts people are buried alive. Their spirits thereafter hover about the place and bring disaster on strangers who come there with evil intentions. Monks and nuns who lead bad lives and break their vows are also believed to pass into demons when they die. There is therefore a constant and lamentable recruiting of the forces of the nats and tasés.

776 755 In some places certain nats have qualities ascribed to them which are not entirely obstructive and obnoxious. For example, in a nat's house at Nyaung-u, before the figure of a spirit called Apé Shwemyosin, lies a twisted, curious-shaped stone, which has magic powers ascribed to it. The sick come and try to lift it up. If they are successful they will soon recover health; if, on the other hand, its weight is too much for them, the inquirers will die. Similarly, on the ascent to Mandalay Hill there is a little chapel in which, besides three figures of the hentha, the Brahminy goose, each said to contain a sacred tooth brought from Ceylon, there is a flat, oval stone, with mystic characters inscribed on it. Many resort there to ascertain the probable issue of an intended journey or enterprise. If the stone proves heavy, the sign is bad.

787 The belief in spirits naturally induces a corresponding faith in omens. The Deitton, an astrological book constantly in the hands of Bedin Sayās, but carefully excluded from all monasteries, gives a great variety of them; auguries from the flight and number of birds seen, omens from the barking of dogs, the movements of bees, and the laying of eggs by fowls. Rules are given for choosing the site on which a house is to be built, and omens drawn from the substances found in digging the foundations. Posts are called male, female, or a-thet ma shi, neuter, according as they are of the same girth throughout, larger at the bottom or in the middle. Under ordinary circumstances, houses with female taing are fortunate, with neuter disastrous. Posts which are largest at the top are called taing bilu, "demon beams," and are especially unhappy.

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CHAPTER XLI

CHOLERA SPECIFICS

753 ●755 OCCASIONALLY a whole Burmese village or a quarter of the town seems to be seized with sudden madness. Without a moment's warning, apparently, and moved by one common impulse, the able-bodied scramble on to the tops of their houses and fall to work to beat the wooden or mat roofs with bamboos and billets of wood. The old and feeble stand down below and thump unmelodious drums, or bray their loudest on raucous trumpets, while the women and children dance round about and open their mouths and yell. No one has any right to talk about pandemonium till he has been scared by the sudden bursting on the night air of this diabolical uproar. New-comers in Rangoon, mindful of the scares which have been frequent of late years, on hearing the outburst for the first time, are apt to believe that the long-prophesied rising of the "budmash" population has at length commenced, and that the ferocious Burman has started on the war-path. They are the more inclined to believe it because the outbreak always takes place at night, and, at a distance, suggests nothing so much as a general free fight. But it is nothing of the kind; nothing could be farther from it. It is, in point of fact, the regular sequel to a religious ceremony. Cholera has appeared in the district. There have been a number of deaths, and the population is aroused to a sense of the danger. The terrible epidemic is of annual occurrence, notwithstanding all sanitary precautions, at the beginning of the south-west monsoon in May. The first heavy bursts of the rainy season wash all manner of surface impurities, animal and vegetable, into the wells

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and tanks, and cases of sporadic cholera are the consequence. So says the civil surgeon; but the Burmans do not believe him. They are convinced that a nat-so, some evil spirit, has taken up his abode in the place, and is exacting revenge for some real or fancied insult. They accordingly take this means of forcing him to quit; and if the malignant nat can be supposed to have any nerves whatever, it certainly ought to be effective.

The brethren of the monastery discountenance the practice as far as they can—as indeed every one not afflicted with a dulness of hearing might be expected to do. It is a remnant of the old geniolatry, and, having nothing to do with pure Buddhism, confounds the dewas of the six heavens with the heathenish spirits of the old wild tribes. But cholera is a pestilence that regards not the yellow robe of the mendicant any more than the gay paso of the frivolous; and so the pôngyis hold the ceremony which immediately precedes the wild riot called thayè tôpthi, and display their opposition no more violently than by getting out of the way as fast as the dignified walk prescribed to the Assembly of the Perfect permits.

It is related that long ago, at the time of the beginning of religion, the terrible pestilence swept over Kapilawut, the city of Thudawdana, the father of the Lord Buddha. Only at the intercession and by the merits of the prayers and good works of the saviour of the world and his assembly, was the plague stayed, and the city saved from desolation—hence the function called pareit yôtthi. Cholera has broken out in the village. Several deaths have occurred in succession with the terrible suddenness which is characteristic of the disease. The dirges played by the bands for the dead fade into one another and break out all down the street. Then one of the chief men of the place makes preparations and begs the monks to come down from the monastery. A raised dais is put up at the back of the room for the accommodation of the yahans, and covered with mats. Offerings to the holy men are arranged in a long row before the platform—rice, fruit, flowers, betel-boxes, pillows, cups and bowls. Alongside of these are placed the vessels which the monastic superior is to consecrate—nyaung ye-o, sacred to the use of

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the religious, and pareit-o, so called from the ceremony. These are partially filled with water, leaves of the thabye bin, a species of *Eugenia*, are put in, and along with them coarse yellow string wound round a small stick. When all is ready the monks come down in the grey of the evening, moving, as always, in slow procession of Indian file from the kyaung, followed by their disciples carrying the large monastic fan, or perhaps an arm-load of palm-leaf manuscript books. Meanwhile, and all through the ceremony, the people from all parts of the village come in, each person bearing his pareit-o, with its supply of thabye bin leaves and modicum of yellow string. The pôngyis, their eyes fixed humbly on the ground, take their allotted seats without a word to any one, not even to the master of the house. All the people kneel as they come in, and remain in the half-kneeling, half-prostrate position customary before members of the thenga.

The abbot of the kyaung then begins the service, longer or shorter according to the capability or inclination of the officiator. Certain formulæ reciting the praises of the Lord Buddha are always chanted; the Sèba Thila, the Ten Commandments incumbent on all believers on worship days and on the earnest always, are usually declaimed. Sometimes it ends with this; sometimes, if the abbot is an enthusiast, the law is preached. Then he extends his hands over the collected vessels and consecrates them, and the religious ceremony is over. The yahans rise and file back to their kyaung as solemnly as they came. The presents made to them are carried off at the same time, some by the boy pupils, some by the donors. The people then take away their pots to their houses, and shortly afterwards, at a given signal, the wild clattering on the roofs begins. This lasts till the performers are exhausted. Fortunately that usually occurs within half an hour. If the malignant demon can hold out so long, it is much more than most Europeans can, and their futile remonstrances and threats sometimes add to the general din, especially if, as not unfrequently happens, the disturbance is repeated for several nights.

000 There is this much, however, to be said in favour of the custom, that it often actually does stay the spread of cholera

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—no doubt owing to the diversion of mind produced by banging away on the top of your roof, and the confidence and hope which the operation induces. Moreover, so much damage is done to the house itself that repairs take some time, which also serves to keep the mind occupied.

When the thayè tôpthi is over, the people return to their houses, where the pots with their consecrated contents are. The yellow string is unwound from the sticks and divided into lengths. Some people hang it all round the eaves of the house in little bags, others tie pieces of it round the left wrist, more especially those who go about much. At a time when there is cholera about, most of the young men may be seen with these wristlets. A Rangoon clerk detected wearing one colours with annoyance, and says his parents made him put it on. He very probably throws it away, but the same night he will have a fresh piece on. The thread is coloured with dye obtained from the wood of the jack-tree, the same which supplies the colouring matter for the monkish garments. The thabye bin leaves are kept in the pot, or scattered about the house. The tree is particularly highly esteemed by the Burmese. A species of it, the thabu thabye bin (the Malay apple, *Eugenia malaccensis*), is celebrated as the largest tree in the island which lies to the south of Mount Myinmo. Sprigs and leaves of the thabye bin are cut, prayers and supplications for absent friends and relatives offered up before them, and then the twig is thrown into a pot of water. A song has been composed about the tree itself, and is one of the most popular of those that do not belong to the category of love-songs. The jester in a play has always an unfailing draw when, wishing to testify his regard for some one, he declares he has cut down an entire thabye bin and thrown it into the river that his friend may enjoy good health. The joke lies in the contrast between this and the couple of leaves in a small pot used by people ordinarily.

It might have been expected that contact with English civilisation and doctors would have put an end to the riotous absurdity of the thayè tôpthi; but it has not by any means. In fact the house-beating goes on more vigorously in Rangoon and the larger district towns than elsewhere. This is

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very essential that even the most empirical doctor should know at least the names of these diseases. The mere sound of them is as good as medicine to a man with a stomach-ache.

Bewitchings, of course, do not count as diseases. Very often when a man has very strong griping pains which no amount of drugs will serve to alleviate, the doctor declares that there is an a-pin in him. Some wizard has introduced a piece of raw flesh into his stomach by means of a spell, and this goes on drawing everything to it till it kills the man. When a sick man is unable to pronounce certain letters the doctors are able to calculate in how many days or hours he will die. It is not wise to dispute this. The fulfilment of their prophecies lies very completely in their hands.

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Very often images of pagodas and Buddhas may be seen outside a house in the country villages. There is some one sick within, and the pious resort to this expedient to get rid of the malady. This method is called payā tayā, and does not exclude medical advice. The figures are small, and are usually made of pasteboard or clay. A man afflicted with a headache will often hang up pictures of peacocks and hares under his eaves, along with small fans. The peacock represents the sun and the hare the moon, and the indisposition is supposed to result from sun or moonstroke. Sometimes a sayā, when he is called in, will recommend that the patient be moved a little to the eastward or the westward, if his illness arises from kan. Similar to this is the ceremony called yedaya yayi or yedaya sin. A small coffin with a tiny corpse inside it is manufactured and carried a small distance to the east or the west and there buried. When the ayôp, the effigy of the patient, has been thus disposed of, he ought to get well. These matters are decided from the sick man's horoscope, which shows from what constellations he is particularly likely to suffer harm.

The witch doctor usually has an elaborate rod called ywatan, marked all over with cabalistic figures, and often with medicines let into it. The sayā stands before the possessed person and threatens a blow. The witch or spirit in the victim then becomes anxious and pays reverence with clasped hands. It is then forced to relate exactly its name

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place of abode, friends and relations, and so on. The possessing demon is usually a witch, and she acknowledges that she has entered the patient from motives of hatred or revenge. The wise man could now kill the witch with his bedin if he pleased, but is usually persuaded by the relatives of the sick man not to do so. A desire not to spoil his own trade is also not without its argument. So he accepts a number of presents from the patient's family, and is then won over, contenting himself with giving the possessed person a sound thrashing as a remembrance of him and a return for the fees. Then he commands the witch to depart and not come back again. As a conclusion the victim and his relations are enjoined not to pursue the witch any farther. Sometimes, however, they are obstinate, and refuse to rest here. Then, if the affair has happened in native territory, the case is brought before the magistrate, who has the accused tied to a bamboo and thrown into the river along with the accuser, who is served in the same fashion. The one that sinks wins the case, and the loser pays all costs. In English territory the magistrate has the complainants bundled out of court.

If any one doubts the power of the hmaw sayā, he works a miracle to cure them of their scepticism, and prove that he governs all creatures. He gets an empty earthenware jar, covers it with a cloth, and repeats his spells over it. When the cloth is removed, there is smoking-hot rice and roasted fowl in the jar, and those present are allowed to eat as much as they like. If they eat with perfect belief, they will never be hungry again; but perfect belief is practically never found. Sometimes, however, a demon gets angry at the display of power, and interferes in an officious way. He steals some of the cooked meat out of the jar, and does his best to work a counter-miracle. He never quite manages to do it, but the ceremony is disturbed by his interference and has to be gone through again. Sometimes the sayā himself indulges in a little pleasantry. The spectators see a beautiful melon so juicy and ripe that their mouths water at the very sight of it; but when they seize a piece and already feel it between their lips, it vanishes away and they bite their own fingers. Unless they are hopelessly stupid they do not laugh at hmaw sayās after that.

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The following are a few prescriptions for whitlow and bad sores from a Maulmein doctor's books :—

1. The "hand" of a tauk-tè, the big trout-spotted gekko, that haunts old trees and the thatch of houses ; or, more probably, a bit of the stem of an epiphyte called the tauk-tè's hand.
2. Sulphur.
3. The bulb of a white lily.
4. A chilli roasted.
5. Cock's dung.

Mix in equal parts, and stir while heating it, and finally add some earth oil.

Again : Take a sufficient quantity of cock's dung, add to it a small quantity of copperas, pound them well together, and then mix with earth oil and some sesamum oil.

Seven or eight dry seeds of dankwè (*Cassia fœtida*), well bruised, and then intimately mixed with a little congee (rice water), with "sufficient" earth oil added, also proves a very effective remedy.

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The bedin sayā's books are partly written, partly filled, with magic figures and pictures. The squares are all formed in accordance with the ordinary Hindoo law. When the wise man is asked questions, he keeps writing down numbers and characters on his parabaik tablets and rubbing them out, chanting to himself all the time. Sometimes he shakes cowries and seeds together, and when they fall out, decides from their position which of the pictures or rhymes in his book is to be consulted. Each of these gives its own answer, but they are not always as definite in their character as is desirable. The sayā always speaks in the declamatory monotone of the linga.

The following are the names of some of the familiar spirits and their likenesses :—

Upadana Pyuda, a spirit who lives under the earth and protects the husbandman. When he comes above ground he rides on a serpent. The inquiring farmer whose cowrie refers to this picture is most fortunate.

Sadi Wazadat, a wild figure galloping on a horse. This means failure of the attempt.

Saka Bada, a monkey mounted on a goat. Denotes fertility of mind.

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In another picture a crow is represented breaking a vessel full of money with its beak. Close at hand are a man and woman embracing one another. This denotes loss.

A man and his wife represented dancing together signify great gifts to the pagoda.

Another picture, which represents a husband and wife standing together in front of a house, with a horse and cow near it, denotes that the child to whom this picture may refer will be a farmer.

Near the picture of a dog, which one man holds by the tail while another hits it on the head, is written: "When the lot falls here, be not boastful, but humble; avoid pride and assumption, for that will only raise up enemies for you."

The following are some spells:—

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Take this amulet (a piece of bone carved rudely square, and with mystic figures on it), put your foot up against a thabye tree, and repeat the Ittipithaw (a form of worship in learning which one spends four or five months in the monasteries) thirty-seven times. Then you will be able to turn any given man into a ghost and make him do as you please.

Take the stalk of a betel leaf in your hand. Repeat "Ôm padan rupa wari thwa ha" seven times, and then throw the stalk at the person. He or she is sure then to listen to what you say.

The following is a charm to cause a dream about your lady-love:—Get an exact likeness of her made. Find out the hour and day on which she was born, her name and exact age. Then having begged permission from the guardian spirit of both the houses (your own and hers), chant as follows: "O Thurathadi, fairest goddess of flowers, daughter of nats most high, grant most graciously all that I desire of thee: tasa machan: without keeping back the least remainder; without withdrawing a single joy: prithee do this without fail, sweet goddess of woodland love." Repeat this seven times before the figure. Then go to sleep.

goes on throughout the morning. About 2 P.M. a monk gives a sermon and recites prayers. One of the elders reads aloud to the assemblage an account of the expenditures for the gifts to the monks, concluding the event. 796 735

Animistic and Magical Beliefs

Underlying the elaborate organization and practice of Buddhism, there is a considerable belief in nats, or spirits, and magic. Spirit worship, supposedly contrary to the teachings of Buddhism and opposed by the monks, is indulged in to varying degrees by the villagers. In Tadagale one frequently comes upon small wooden box-like structures affixed to trees, on which there is usually a little food and perhaps a flower as offerings to a particular nat. There seems little doubt that animism was even more important among the Burmese prior to the coming of Buddhism centuries ago. As noted in the description of initiation and wedding ceremonies earlier, nat worship has become interwoven with Buddhist beliefs and practices. It is also manifested in beliefs concerning guardian spirits of houses and particular places and in theories of the causes of many illnesses, including bewitchment and mental disturbances. Mediums, specially versed in the ways of the nats and possessing knowledge of cures for spirit-caused maladies, may be called upon for assistance. 776 755 792

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to go to the hospital (Pantanaw). When we met a Karen friend, he smeared some saffron onto the affected part, and recited something and at once two long lines appeared and it became apparent that the disease was THET TANT. (THET TANT, it is said is of two kinds, male and female, and this person had both. The difference between the two kinds seem to lie in the size of the swellings, the male being larger and more virulent.) The docter in the hospital had to operate on me. He told my parents that if I did not undergo any operation I would surely die, and even if it was successful it would affect a nerve and I would be left with a limp all my life. My parents had him operate and I was cured, but I've had this limp ever since. It was three months from inception before we knew that it was THET TANT."

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When U Myaing cured his patient in Pantanaw, he lighted three or four candles and an incense burner; he recited prayers and the 5 Silas. At the head of the bed he placed the bowl containing water scented with Kalamet cream, Taung-Dan-Gyi cream and perfumes. Then U Myaing took this and began to sprinkle the water about the room, wishing aloud for the patient's recovery. Then he took seven single buds of garlic, weighing about 5 ticals and ground them together, and bandaged them around the thumb. U Myaing continues his account:

"I don't know the recitations for this desease. But what they do is to mix lime and saffron in water and smear it it on the affected part. Some people drink this. This is one method. Using garlic is another method. When the part is smeared with this mixture, the disease comes to the surface. There are some people who have died because the sore burst inside the body. As regards the garlic cure, when I enquired carefully, it turned out that the stanzas recited had nothing to do with effecting the cure. It must have been due to the garlic, because I could cure another person without reciting the stanzas. There are three kinds of THET TANT: the three months kind, the six months kind and the three years kind. It seems as if there is an internal swelling and it rises to the surface and disappears rises again, and so on. When there is a swelling and it is very hot, then it can be diagnosed as THET TANT. When it is is treated, the patient collapses with fever for one night - the night when the swelling is moved to the thumb. The disease is not very rare. I have seen it five or six times. There have been cases like that of Ko Maung Thant in Pantanaw, where the patient has died of internal THET TANT without knowing the nature of his disease. Only when the person is about to die does the internal THET TANT come to the surface. The swelling is hot, but there are also some cases where it is not so.

"The patient who I treated a few days ago in camp is now better. There are various ways and means of treating this disease. Some do it with banznas. After I burst the pustule and squeeze out the pus, I do not put any medicine on the sore. The reason why it cannot be treated on the shoulder is that there is no pus - only an inflamed swelling which is very painful. Some practioners who do not know how to move the swelling smear on the shoulder certain mixtures which are designed to bring out the pus to the surface, and they cure the sore on the shoulder itself.

"I did not take any fee for curing the young boy in Pantanaw. He was very poor and I asked them only to buy the garlic for themselves. This was about 6 years ago, and the patient was about 16 years of age. He was in such a bad condition shouting and yelling in pain, that the parents expected him to die, and were weeping. I realized that whether my treatment proved efficacious or not, it could not make his condition any worse than it was, and so I

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started treatment. The day I started treatment the swelling reached his thumb, and four or five days later it burst. The thumb was placed in antiseptic NGAN YE liquid and smeared with crude petroleum oil and ashes. The name of the boy was Maung Hla Yin of Pathne village. I do not know whether or not they called in practicners. No one came to call me either. I heard of his sickness and went over. He had been suffering for about twenty days before I started to treat him. Not being a practicner, I do not know how to cure other diseases. I know how to cure this disease because it happened to me once and I witnessed the treatment.

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"Some practicners cure the disease in another way - through saffron and white lime. They also have a wooden DAH fashioned out of the wood from a tree which has been struck by lighting. With this DAH they strike at the swelling lightly after which they smear the mixture on. I have no knowledge of where these practicners learn their trade. Burmese cures must be cheap and efficacious. It seems to me that recitations etc. are made to enable the practicner to command a higher fee, since people can and have been cured without any recitations at all. I do not believe in their incantations."

Scabies: NEH (itch). During the Japanese regime, the youngest child had scabies when she was one year old. If the right medicine is given the cure takes only two or three months, and if not, as many years. These sores are moistened itchy skin sores which spread with great rapidity. The Burmese prescription for an ointment to cure scabies includes: sulphur, KYAUK KHA, HSE DAN and copper sulphate. Also THANAT KHA root and KYAUK KHA are mixed together on a KYAUK PYIN stone slab to make a cream for application. The person affected has to bathe often. The medicine which really effected the cure, however, was M & B 693 (Mayer and Baker sulpha pills.) These cost U Myaing 8 annas for a dozen, and only 9 were necessary to cure the child. Before she was cured, her condition was so bad, and her sores so extensive that people were reluctant to carry the baby. They had to carry it swaddled in many clothes.

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Ringworm: PWAI. U Myaing had ringworm once when he was eighteen years old. This happened in Pantanaw, and it took him just three days to cure it. The ringworm whorls were so extensive that U Myaing did not dare to go out and mix with other people. In treatment, U Myaing used a western lotion of which the only distinguishing mark that he remembers is that it was of a "Two snake brand". He followed the directions on the label, bathing the whorls with soap and applying the lotion with a feather. The bottle held about four ounces and cost him Rs. 1/4.

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MWAY KYUT NAR (Hair-coming-off-sore). U Myaing had this affliction once in Pantanaw for a period of 15 days. When a hair falls out the skin in that place reddens and pus accumulates on the leg. The Burmese treatment consists of smearing the affected part with ashes and water mixed together.

Sore eyes: MYET SI NAR (eye sore). Sore eyes have been had by everyone in the family at one time or another. In the last four of five years, each member of the family has been afflicted about once a year. The eye becomes red and inflamed and watery. Tamarind bark is made into a cream and applied. Tamarind leaves are pounded with salt and placed and bandaged on the forehead. The cost of treatment is negligible, since the cure involves the use of about only one anna's worth of salt and the tamarind is obtained free.

Disorders of the Nose: Cough and Cold. AH KH MI (cold-catch) HNAR NGE CHAUNG HSO. (Mucous flowing-cough): All the members of the family get these disorders periodically, that is, about once or twice a year each. Treatment is by smearing balm (Tiger balm or others)

561 263 removed. Old folks habitually like bitter foods - especially tea leaves. Eating prepared foods left over night is strictly prohibited as a cause of illnesses. Curry must be eaten while it is hot. (There are no apparent reasons - just observation from eating spoild [757] foods). Boiled rice and fried dry fish comprises the standard sick diet in addition to other foods especially prescribed for the care or for giving vigour. It is interesting to note that English foods such 177 757 262 as tinned biscuits ("Golden Puff biscuits") or milk preparations ("Hollicks") are preferred for the sick diet by those who can afford them. The "strong" tastes of these foods give strength to the sick person. Lately, western medicines have been recognized as powerful. U Myaing's experiences above show the means by which this idea is established. However, the Burmese doctor is relied on even by families of the administrative class in Rangoon.

759 When a case of sickness seems beyond response to normal treatments, and it has been diagnosed as of a natural cause, the SAY SAYA (medicine-master) is called in. "Foot-hire" at a stiff rate of Rs.5/- for the first visit and 2 or 3 rupees for succeeding visits is paid for this service. "Say-saya, we place the case in your hands" is entoned, to which the doctor replies "If our faith coincides (i.e. patients and doctors) then we will be successful - otherwise we cannot go against Karma". The doctor notes the symptoms, feels forehead for fever, inquires of colour of urine and the course of the disorder. He then chants in verse the diagnosis as "eyes yellow, [198] motion irregular, forehead moist - (giving nature of sickness)". The treatment also follows in verse form as a rigid formula prescribing medicines and diet. The doctor is a specialist in one or more types of medicine which he has concocted such as "blood purifying medicine", "fever medicine", "purgative medicine", and he will have ●[755] been called in because of this specialty. Charmed water is frequently given. Here verse formula is said over a cup of water to give it power.

SAY SAYA are trained when young men as apprentices to older doctors. The training includes memorising many books giving diagnosis and formulas for curing as well as learning the master's arts.

(arm-tie) charm consisting of a small metal tube bound about the upper arm or neck and containing an inscription written by a pongyi on silver or aluminum foil. Once a year, after new years (in March), a PAYA-TUDA (prayer-recite) ceremony is held. At this time pongyis recite the precepts of Buddha for the benefit of the ghosts - who "become hot and run away". Younger people, especially children, are susceptible to being possessed by ghosts. At this time they "throw fits" and are uncontrolable. Under the supervision of a pongyi the ghost is cast out by means of threats and beatings administered to the person of the possessed one. Beatings are severe and continuous often lasting an hour, until the ghost says he is "afraid" and departs. The possessed one, thus cured, does not later complain of rough treatment since this is borne by the invading ghost. Perhaps this relates to the less formulated, "nameless horrors" of unseen and unaccountable forces that cause otherwise unexplainable events - which concept pervades much of western thought to this day.

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A major difference between nats and ghosts is that ghosts cause only harm while nats are ordinarily beneficial in the manner described above. Ghosts may also be controlled for evil purposes against individuals in a variety of black magic. The specialists in black magic are PAH-YOH-GA-SAYA (influence-masters) of black magic or "lower - "upper root" (heaven) masters combat the "lower root evil" root", (hell-evil), who administer the evil influence. Witches also have personal magic powers that allow them to cause harm to an individual by introducing foreign matter such as lumps of meat, hair balls, into the body of the victim. It is never known for sure who the witches are but old women of peculiar habits, and especially of the fishermen's group, are suspected. Such individuals are considered generally malivalent and special precautions are needed to avoid offending them. The influence masters, however, are well known and receive gift-fees for performing services either of causing or controlling black magic influences. Both groups, but especially the influence masters of the lower root control ghosts for their purposes.

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A major means of securing control of a ghost or "ghost-rearing" is to get the finger bone of a recently deceased person who died a "true death". Incantations said over the bone insures the obedience of

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25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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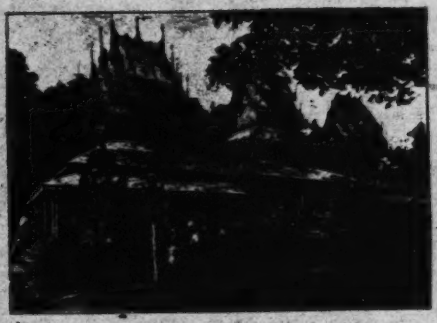

220. KOTHEMA YON (p. 101).

of the unsuccessfully vaccinated caught the disease, and ten of them died. None of the forty-four were attacked. These statistics could be multiplied. The medicine-dealers keep many of the crude commercial drugs, besides simples of their own collecting. Of the former, the principal are aloes, jalap, croton-seed, senna, bitter barks, catechu, opium, camphor, ginger, cardamom and other aromatics. The medicinal use of castor-oil is not known, though the plant is common. Spirits are now used medicinally. Many of the vegetable remedies are almost inert (see *The Burmese, what do they know of medicine?* by Dr. D. H. Cullimore). But there is one that deserves to be known, namely, the Shan remedy for tape-worm, *tisst*, which is both effectual and mild. Among the mineral drugs are mercury, calomel, sulphur, blue and green vitriols, alum, salammoniac, nitre. There is a whole category of supposititious remedies, tiger's gall, rhinoceros' blood, ant-eater's scales, and so forth; they are charred before being made up. Allied to this class of remedies is that of charms, the vendors of which (nat-wives—*nakhaddw*) trade on the superstition that disease is caused by demons. Every patient will be as particular to mention his star as to describe his complaint. He will be advised to avoid certain classes of remedies on certain days. The "Sunday son" must not purge on Friday, and so on. In times of epidemic and panic, *thkhwazdi* are erected at every house, as they likewise are in cases of sickness (No. 431). They are merely of sand, held together with circles of bast. Sometimes they are erected to avert calamity declared to be impending in a *sinnyo-khwan*, a message on gold foil dropped from heaven by a *Thadyá* (p. 186). Images are dedicated

221. CHILDREN'S BAZAR (p. 98).

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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282. PREPARING TAWTHALIN OFFERINGS P. 186.

at the temples in the same spirit. *Thèbônzdi* are erected on the day of a sick person's planet, and decorated with flags according to the years of age. Here Buddhism, which knows of no vicarious merit (or demerit), is tainted by a survival of animism (p. 188). The merit of the act is intended to cancel the demerit of some troubled spirit which is seeking to possess the body of the sufferer. Offerings are likewise set apart for the troubled spirit in the forest, to divert him from the sick person. When an epidemic of cholera occurs, the whole village sets up a din at sunset with bamboo sticks, to frighten the demons away. But many minds are averse to such superstitions, and they seek for natural explanations. They ascribe disease to states of the blood, to "heats" and "vapours." The cooling qualities of nitre are extolled for the one, and the cordial effects of spice for the other. Dietetic questions interest everybody, and everyone has his or her pet nostrum. Very little operative surgery is attempted as compared with India and China—merely the opening of abscesses and setting of bones. Hare-lip and cleft palate, and the cognate deformities, appear to be frequent. The dressings applied to wounds and sores are chiefly turmeric, slaked lime, *nîm*-leaves.

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Successful lithotomies and other major operations, and the boon of chloroform, have spread the fame of western surgery in a vastly wider circle than it can reach itself. The sick are tenderly nursed by the Burmans, and never abandoned in panic fear as happens in epidemics among the hill-tribes. There are few greater sources of religious merit than ministering to the sick. During the puerperium, the Burman custom is to main-

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283. BURMAN CARRIER.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

customs. Grant Brown observes that, while Buddhists in the Chindwin area still sacrifice fowls to the god of the harvest, 'the thing is done somewhat surreptitiously and shamefacedly.'[12]

Other practices survive more openly. In many Burmese villages there is a *nat-ka-daw*, or spirit-medium, generally an elderly or middle-aged woman, who is supposed to be married to a *Nat*. She tells fortunes, and is called in sometimes in cases of sickness to discover whether the patient will recover. Mr. Spear describes an incident of this kind which took place in the main street of a large town in the presence of many spectators. "The *nat-ka-daw*, in addition to her usual clothing, wore a sash around the waist and a cloth wound around her head. She danced with a dah, a long and heavy Burmese knife, in her hand, until she fell exhausted." Plantains and coconuts had been placed in a shelter, opposite the house, as offerings to the *Nat*.[13]

In this case, apparently, the *Nat* was neither held responsible for the sickness nor expected to cure it. There are times of epidemic sickness, however, when a whole village is temporarily abandoned, and special rituals are followed to placate the *Nat*, who is considered to have caused the epidemic.

In an interesting account of the development of a modern *Nat* cultus, a Burmese writer describes a public festival in honour of the *Nat*. A play is staged during which one of the Thirty Seven *Nats*, who is personified by a villager, asks the *Nat* of the locality if he is taking due care of the villagers. Here the *Nat* is obviously regarded as benevolent. But we are told that this was not always so. Formerly the Nat was cruel, unreasonable, mischievous and demoniac. But "he is now believed to have taken to religion, to keep the sabbath and to lead the life of a saintly god." In spite of his own sanctity, however, he seems to favour evil-doers. "No organised theft is ever committed in Lower Burma ... without invoking his aid." The would-be criminals cook a meal within a circle they have marked on the ground. If any of the rules of the succeeding ritual are broken, the proposed robbery is abandoned. Some Buddhist monks of this region, more orthodox than others, have tried to suppress the Nat cultus, but in vain.[14]

Such beliefs and practices are obviously bound to affect thought and conduct. The Burmese feel around them a vast, invisible *Nat* world, which is both near and remote. There are spirits in the trees, the rivers,

[12] *The Pre-Buddhist Religion of the Burmese*, p. 9.

[13] R. F. Spear, unpublished MS, *The Syncretism of Animism and Buddhism in Burma* (1928) chap. 1, p. 14.

[14] U Tha Khin, "Is U Yin Gyi a National God of the Burmans?" *J.B.R.S.*, Vol. XIV, part II (1924).